

Competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs) required for collaborative working

An introduction to the mindsets and
behaviours needed in order to
collaborate successfully

An MMM Guide

A large, stylized graphic of the letters 'MM' is positioned in the lower half of the page. The letters are rendered in a thick, brush-stroke style with a vibrant, multi-colored gradient. The left 'M' transitions from a bright pink at the top to a deep magenta at the bottom. The right 'M' transitions from a light green at the top to a bright cyan at the bottom. The overall effect is dynamic and modern.

Competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs) required for collaborative working

“The systems intelligence needed to deal with the challenges we face as the Industrial Age comes to an end is collective and must be built through working together at many levels, within and beyond organisations, in teams and networks than span industries, communities and global supply chains”¹

Peter Senge

This short document uses interview material from the six groups of arts and cultural organisations that participated in MMM’s 2008-2010 Collaborative Working Pilots² to illustrate the kinds of behaviours that help successful collaboration.

Much of the literature on collaboration concurs that successful collaboration is easier to espouse than achieve: far too many collaborative initiatives produce a lot of talk but little action. This same literature also offers insight into the kinds of behaviours that help and hinder successful collaboration. It suggests that the problems that arise in collaborating come, in part, from underestimating the difficulties that highly diverse groups experience when learning together. Even if group members recognise that they need to do this, they frequently avoid exploring difficult subjects because they want to avoid conflict. They know that trust is important but they often lack reliable strategies for building it. They may say they want to work collaboratively across boundaries, but ultimately self-interest and vested interests prevail.³

In the arts, as in the wider not for profit sector, the initial impetus to collaborate can

¹ Senge, P. et al (2008) *The Necessary Revolution*, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

² The Collaborative Working Pilots was one of a series of strands that formed MMM’s fourth cycle of work which ran from 2008-2010

³ Senge, P. et al (2008) *The Necessary Revolution*, Nicholas Brearley Publishing. See also <http://emergentbydesign.com/2010/07/01/guidelines-for-group-collaboration-and-emergence/>

often be driven by funders, which can create a culture of shallow opportunism about money rather than a carefully considered, hard-headed assessment of mutually desired goals. One pilot participant explained it thus: *“there is such intense pressure for people around outputs, around funding, around staying open and paying wages ...that inevitably ...despite all the rhetoric around collaboration, it is easy to form (a kind of) protectionism around what you have...people collaborate as a means to getting that additional extra funds or means of retaining the funds they have already got.”* The dangerous impact of this dynamic is what David Carrington has described as ‘the dance of deceit’ where *“the funder may set the terms and processes, but the funded, fearful of there being no alternative, ‘bend too willingly’ in whatever direction money is blowing”*⁴ This was underlined by another pilot participant: *“...people who work in the arts are used to knowing that there are ways that you are supposed to present things within a particular funding stream ... actually I think sometimes what is real... in people’s minds [becomes] confused.”* Even without financial carrots spurring a collaboration into life, genuinely shared visions within and across sectors are rare, with one person’s or one small group’s vision being imposed, subtly or otherwise, on others.

One reason for all these shortfalls is that collaboration is often built upon good intentions rather than the requisite competencies, qualities and attributes (CQAs) present within the collaborative group. Effective collaboration often requires CQAs that are not necessarily present among executive leaders. It takes time and a high level of commitment, to build ‘collaborative muscle’. In the absence of these, well-established bad habits can take over, such as avoiding conflict or launching into debates that merely reinforce previously held views.

Understanding the breadth and depth of CQAs needed by individual organisations and across groups is especially crucial in a challenging environment. Indeed, with hindsight, a number of participants in the pilots felt that testing for the presence of these essential CQAs before embarking on their collaborative projects would have been a very valuable exercise. *“..we could (have done with) a consultation to tell us what is lacking... because you don’t actually know what you are lacking until you*

⁴ http://www.davidcarrington.net/documents/CARITAS_Augusto9_p33-p35editedCSFINAL__000.pdf

get into it and doing it”, said one participant. “...you need to talk more [about] being collaboration-ready. Maybe a preparatory period of development and support to actually get organisations into the right state of mind. ...our facilitator in that first away day ...felt we were nowhere near ready. She thought ... we were actually averse,” said another.

MMM is developing a diagnostic tool building on the work of others⁵, designed to help others with this task in the future.

10 Essential CQAs for successful collaboration

Findings from interviews with participants in the six collaborative working pilots, together with MMM’s own research⁶ and an extensive literature review suggest that the following are essential CQAs for successful collaboration:

1. Seeing systems

Creative practitioners and organisations that collaborate successfully have learned how to view the larger systems in which they live and work. They look beyond events and superficial fixes to see deeper structures and forces at play. They don’t allow boundaries (either organisationally or culturally imposed) to limit their thinking.⁷ One pilot participant described it as *“The ability to look beyond the short-term benefits and take the longer term view, which is by far the most difficult view to take, because everyone wants the best for their own organisation”*.

2. Wanting to learn

At an individual level, learning is more concerned with gaining knowledge, understanding, and skills. At an organisational level, it is more concerned with evolving perceptions, visions, strategies, and transferring knowledge. At both levels, it is involved with discovery and invention - i.e. recognising, creating, or exploring new knowledge to generate new ideas or concepts. Senge defines a learning

⁵ There are several diagnostic tools already available designed for the private sector e.g. GBPA’s Collaborative Excellence diagnostic <http://www.gbpalliance.com/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/programme/21st-century-people/>

⁷ Senge, P et al (2008) *The Necessary Revolution*, Nicholas Brearley Publishing

organisation as one where “...people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together”⁸ This neatly sums up the kind of organisational culture needed to be successful in a collaborative endeavor. Unfortunately, in many arts and cultural organisations, especially the larger ones, organisational structures are not conducive to reflection and learning. The hierarchical corporate structure, with different functions in separate departments, can not only create competition for resources but also develop competing core values and measures of success.

Furthermore, people may lack the tools and guiding ideas to make sense of the situations they face. Discovering how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels is key, as was evidenced by many participants in the pilots, who had the opportunity to observe how others worked. Some gained profound insights into their own practice: *“I have discovered myself fighting for things I didn’t know I cared about quite so much. I mean championing public engagements is really interesting. My career as an artistic director [has meant] being the person who has to fight off the marketing teams in order to try and make the work I want to make. And so discovering that actually I was the person who really cared about not just how we talk to the public, but whether we could change the way the public behaved towards us or whether audience numbers could change the way they behave towards us, has been really interesting. It hasn’t been so much that I have changed any views, but I have discovered how free I felt about it.”*

3. Building shared vision

One of the disciplines required of successful learning organisations, building shared vision, is critical to success in collaborations and emerged as the biggest pre-occupation of participants in the pilots.

Creating shared vision means unearthing shared ‘pictures of the future’ that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance. It is achieved through processes that are inclusive, and spread effectively through processes that are reinforcing, for example when increased clarity, enthusiasm and commitment rubs

⁸ Senge, P.M. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline*, Century Business

off on others: *“As people talk, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits grow”*⁹.

Those who have been involved in developing and delivering shared visions know that they have the power not only to be hugely uplifting but also to encourage experimentation and innovation. However, vision is only truly shared when people are committed to each other having it, not just each person individually having it. That sense of connection and community with respect to the vision is needed to provide the focus and energy for learning. It is the commitment to support each other in realising the shared vision that gives the vision power and supplies the guiding force that enables organisations to navigate difficult times and to keep the learning process on course.¹⁰

Shared vision takes time to emerge and requires on-going dialogue. By sharing and listening to each other’s personal visions, new insights will surface that continually shape the shared vision making it into a perpetual ongoing process of evolution driven by a constant need to assess both the internal and external environment.¹¹ As one pilot participant put it: *“the best collaboration happens when you go with a blank sheet of paper and talk to somebody [with] shared interests and commonalities: something genuinely comes out of the conversation.”*

Pilot participants recognised the importance of spending time shaping and re-shaping shared vision in various ways, often continuing to do so when they were quite well into the collaboration: *“To me the big mind-shift that has happened is that... the larger organisation is moving from thinking ‘what can this do for us’ to.... genuinely looking at what can this do [for the] broader concept. ... shifting away from ‘how does it help us’ to ‘how does it help the project’... was really important.”*

The process of shaping and re-shaping shared vision was often challenging in very positive ways: *“I think it might have been a great advantage that our needs could*

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ <http://www.systemsinsync.com/pdfs/Shared%20Vision.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid

not be met... we have had to step out of the role where there was... something immediate or short term (for us) to gain and to get into a more philosophical role about how we interact with the sector, which was not the (original) intention.” One participant reflected, *“...this has started to open up some permeability actually. And it has allowed us to interrogate... how we all think or feel about our relationship with artist development, rather than ticking a box, to really say ‘do we do it’? Do we just skim the surface of it? Could we do it better?”* Sometimes, however, the process generated some uncomfortable truths: *“...we are not a homogenous a group and therefore I think some hurdles we have had to face up to have been because we have not only different starting points, but different interests.”*, one pilot participant observed.

Clarity of purpose was seen as a major contributor to developing successful shared visions across the pilot groups as this quote illustrate: *“...what is the most important thing? What is it you are going to collaborate for? Do you believe that is a worthwhile end? Secondly, will you get something from it? Or somebody else get something out of it? And will the net benefit exceed the effort in time, cost, commitment and what you might have to give up in order to take part in that?”*

4. Building a critical mass for change within an organisation

Without first patiently building internal leadership networks within organisations to carry forward bold new ideas, large-scale collaboration can result in lots of reports and declarations but little real organisational change. Engaging people in the process of change from the beginning enables people to contribute their ideas, experience and knowledge. They are able to validate the change and become supporters and advocates of it, which encourages ownership and responsibility. Without engagement, change can be seen as being ‘imposed’ and ‘done to me’. But to create change of a certain scale it is necessary to embrace the energy in the whole system. Change operating in isolation will not bring about the full benefits and added value. With a critical mass of support behind the change effort, implementation occurs naturally, with greater speed and ease. Until a critical mass is achieved the change is very frail and can be easily destroyed.

Buy-in from across the organisation was not always achieved early enough in some pilots: *"...it has sat too deeply with the CEOs"*, observed one group. *"No matter how many times I have restructured and changed (X), or how many times I have learned the lesson that it is always best to be open, it is always best to tell everybody everything up front, it is always best to engage as many people as possible in everything, and they will go with you, I still don't do it... I still have to stop myself and make myself do it"*, confessed one participant. *"Those who are engaging with this are very positive and enthusiastic about it, but there are an awful lot of others who still don't really know about it... Embedding the process much more deeply across the organisation for the longer term, that for me is quite important and I don't know how we tackle that,"* said another.

Other challenges to building the critical mass needed lay with the changing nature of the collaborative focus and in trust building: *"...it has been quite tough to explain to the rest of the team what the value is in continuing to be part of the collaboration, because it has had to change so much... they accepted that, but that has not been an easy conversation to have"* was one participant's experience. *"There are a whole set of skills around how you allow everybody to participate in a way that is meaningful for everybody. It requires everyone to be honest and direct and open. One of the biggest challenges I have found is that there is a coded behaviour that goes on; there are many levels of nuance about what people say and what they mean"* was another.

When groups got this right the new energy released was palpable: *"members of staff that are involved in the different meetings are reporting back that they are having a really fascinating revelatory game-changing time"*

"...they all love meeting what they call the 'other organisations' and they all got an awful lot out of that. So it has been very valuable."

"..we were a bit slow off the blocks, trying to get people in my place involved. But people are involved in various working groups now and they are all incredibly excited about it."

"Some of the staff we have involved have been people who are used to working in a

collaborative way, but also others were not used to that and they came back quite shocked in a good way, having their horizons opened after management meetings. People came back jaws dropped.”

Often well-tuned project management processes helped to create that critical mass: *“it is so well organised that people are getting to pick up on bits of it now and are very excited about it. They are really enjoying being asked to go to various task groups and feeling that there is something tangible to get out of it.”*

5. Developing mutual trust and respect

Trust and respect are interlinked and underpin all good relationships. They are the sine qua non of effective collaboration because the nature of collaboration itself – working jointly in order to achieve shared goals and outcomes – requires interdependence between those involved and interdependence creates vulnerabilities.

Given its importance, knowing what kind of trust is required and knowing how to build and maintain it is key. Solomon and Fernando¹² distinguish between three kinds of trust, advocating what they describe as ‘authentic trust’ as the kind best pursued and developed. Authentic trust, they propose, involves conscious evaluation of others, taking into account the individual capabilities and personal histories of those being trusted, recognising the inherent risk and making the conscious choice to trust anyway.

The behavioural patterns that generate trust are generally considered to be reliability and consistency, reciprocity and integrity, open and honest communication, sharing and delegating, and empathy and loyalty. The wider literature around collaboration stresses the need to understand the potential landmines related to trust.

Collaborations often run into trouble because they jump too quickly to “outcomes” without first setting ground rules and building key relationships of trust at both the executive director and staff levels. Time and resources spent on assessing levels of trust at the outset and developing strategies for building trust can avoid significant

¹² Solomon, R.C. and Flores, F. (2001) Building Trust In Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life, OUP. The other two types of trust they define are: *naive trust*, that unreflective innocent trust of a small child with no concept of betrayal; and *blind trust*, that self-deceptive willful denial of any evidence of betrayals.

problems later on. As corporate anthropologist Karen Stephenson says, “relationships are the true medium of knowledge exchange, and trust is the glue that holds them altogether”¹³.

Out of all the behavioural patterns listed above, the need for open and honest communication was the most referenced by the pilot groups as these quotes demonstrate:

“...speaking the truth, saying exactly what your agenda is as an organisation, is very important. Each part of the collaboration needs to know exactly what the other part of it wants to get out of it...”

“One of the things about this process that was very clear quite quickly is that we all entered into the collaboration because we had our own agendas, and those agendas we thought and hoped were complementary. To really work in a collaborative way you have to be honest as to whether that remains true. We certainly had to explore the fact that some of the things we wanted, we are not going to get... you have got to be really clear what it is you want and not conceal it. In more straight-forward partnerships, say between a funder and an organisation, or a client or customer, you don't need to declare your hand in the way that you do with a bigger collaborative group.”

“as much as you think you can be crystal clear with conversations and perspectives of information being shared, you need to really, really spell it out.”

6. Managing across boundaries

Managing successfully across boundaries is key to successful collaborations and requires the active building of both hard and soft relationship bonds - hard meaning the formal relationships which need to be built around the structured processes required for collaboration, and soft meaning more personal relationships and

¹³ Stephenson, K. (2005) Trafficking in Trust, The Art and Science of Human Knowledge Networks, at http://www.drkaren.us/KS_publications01.htm

friendships. These softer bonds have been proven to have the most impact on managing across boundaries, and championing the practices and processes that support co-operative relationships is crucial to bridging boundaries and sharing knowledge.¹⁴ The actual power of an organisation exists in the structure of its human network, not in the architecture of command and control superimposed on it.¹⁵ Tacit knowledge – the critical information that makes organisations functional – is in fact transferred not through established channels within the formal hierarchy but instead through informal relationships. The quality, type and extent of those relationships are much more influential than most leaders recognise. As Stephenson says: *“Relationships are the true medium of knowledge exchange, and trust is the glue that holds them altogether.”*¹⁶ Collaborating successfully requires those in leadership positions to take heed of this reality and harness it using their ‘convening’ skills to ensure that right people can come together at the right time and are able to speak openly and productively.

7. Communicating effectively and appropriately

Whether people understand each other and how information is transferred within organisations and across groups often tops the list of problems in collaborative working. Too much information can be just as much of a problem as too little, underlining the point that it is not quantity that is the key, but what people do with the information once they have got it that really matters. Restricting the speed of information flow can, however, be detrimental to a collaborative team: differentiating between meetings focused on brainstorming, problem solving, decision-making or feedback and those where the purpose is to inform can be helpful.¹⁷

People also tend to believe that communication will forge agreement, whilst in reality when people communicate accurately, they can learn just how far apart they really are. Drucker summed up the communications grail thus: *“In no other area have intelligent men and women worked harder or with greater dedication than*

¹⁴ <http://www.lyndagrattton.com/downloads/collaboration1.pdf>

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ <http://www.drkaren.us/pdfs/chapter15.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://emergentbydesign.com/2010/07/01/guidelines-for-group-collaboration-and-emergence/>

*psychologists, human relations experts, managers, and management students on improving communications in our major institutions. Yet communications has proven as elusive as the Unicorn.*¹⁸

Successful collaborations tend to display two communication characteristics: communication is open and frequent among the partners to the collaboration, and both informal and formal communication links are established. Two communication methods that can facilitate greater collaborative effort are ‘appreciative inquiry’ and ‘dialogue’. Appreciative inquiry is used in organisational development to focus on the strengths of an organisation or group and the possibilities rather than the problems. Multiple stakeholders with differing perspectives are asked to work together and develop a shared vision, strategies for implementation, and assessment of gains. This communication approach is one of active listening, positive regard for differences, and the belief in multiple realities. Visioning together what would be possible and how to get to improved outcomes is quite a different starting point from the problem solving-approach. ‘Dialogue’ is a process that facilitates thinking and questioning together. In dialogue, conversations focus on surfacing assumptions, goals, and values, and summarising disparate ideas in search of connections. This type of strategic conversation allows for further exploration and clarification of different vantage points, thus enabling the development of new knowledge. Information sharing is increased and expertise within the group begins to surface, leading to a new valuation of difference as a context for innovation.

Few executive leaders in the arts or elsewhere possess the depth of communication skills required to facilitate appreciative inquiry or dialogue. As one pilot participant commented: *“You get personalities who play it a bit more like a Poker game. They don’t like to put their cards on the table and all the time they are worried about what might be the outcome of this and what is in this for me in terms of the outcome.”* Adding a facilitator with expertise in these areas at key junctures in the collaborative process could result in powerful and new outcomes.¹⁹

¹⁸ Drucker, P. (1974) ‘Management: tasks, responsibilities, practices’ London: Heinemann

¹⁹ <http://www.systemsinsync.com/pdfs/Shared%20Vision.pdf>

Listening to and observing team members to better recognise their values, goals, and ways of communicating are also critical actions to engage in if good collaboration is to develop. This takes time and effort. As Covey ²⁰ notes: *"Real listening shows respect. It creates trust. As we listen, we not only gain understanding, we also create the environment to be understood. And when both people understand both perspectives, instead of being on opposite sides of the table looking across at each other, we find ourselves on the same side looking at solutions together"*. As one participant who had been well listened to commented: *"I have been made to feel that our contribution is meaningful and useful to the group."*

8. Confronting issues and managing conflict

The unavailability of conflict among collaborating parties has been well documented. Indeed it is inevitable when different ways of thinking and working collide. Yet those different ways of thinking are essential to finding ways forward in complexity, so if managed well, conflict can be a powerful source of creativity and innovation.

"Everybody has to agree from the beginning that there is nothing that can't be disagreed with" said one pilot participant.

However, many people in their professional lives have not learned to understand the potentially beneficial aspects of conflict and to recognise that positive affective relationships and conflict are equally important to effective decision-making. As one pilot participant observed: *People tend to personalise their views and it becomes a personal issue, or they are unreasonably inhibited about putting their views on the table because they fear others may disagree with them, failing to see that it's often from disagreement that the most productive things come."*

Garner proposes that, when using conflict to facilitate collaboration, it is helpful to distinguish between emotional conflict and task conflict. Emotional conflict centres around relationships between individuals and can evolve from a task conflict. Task conflict centers around judgmental differences about how to achieve a common objective and is often easier to address than emotional conflict. Collaborative leaders must be able to facilitate debate (conflict) over task issues and promote the

²⁰ Covey, S.R. (2004) '7 Habits of Highly Effective People', Simon & Schuster Ltd

expression of different perspectives on how problems are defined and approached. If emotional conflict and personal issues surface within the team, leaders need to be able to redirect concerns away from the personal to the task, but when emotional conflict is experienced within a collaborative context, it needs to be discussed, not avoided.²¹ Conflict is dispelled, not by one side dominating the other, or by compromising, but by a creative integration that meets the differing needs of the collaborating parties. Rather than thinking of alternatives that lock into either/or situations, a collaborative approach develops a synthesis of perspectives to invent a third alternative.

This synthesis of perspectives is the desired outcome of collaboration.²² Achieving this synthesis was a challenge for some groups, as this point made by one pilot participant illustrates: *“I would say a key thing that has been very well aired by the group is the tension between smaller organisations with less funding, less security, and less stability in their history, and larger organisations like ourselves, because we are the only one in this partnership to have this level of funding or physical assets...with the best will in the world, there is a suspicion that we are likely to somehow to soak up all the resources, or not have needs of our own, or not be able to be generous in quite the same way.... And I think on the other side there is a suspicion - or an anxiety – that smaller organisations really just need us to fix things for them.”*

Other experiences showed that synthesis emerging strongly: *“I think there is a cordiality about the way in which this group operates. I have only been a member latterly but over the past year I don’t think in any of these meetings there has ever been anything approaching argument. That is not to say that everyone sees everything in exactly the same way, but there is a maturity and an intelligence that enables this group to talk through issues.”*

²¹ Gardner, D. (2005) Essential Competencies for Collaborative Partnerships: Ten Lessons http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/499266_3

²² Ibid

9. Adapting to changing circumstances

Sustainability, at its core, is the capacity to create, test and maintain adaptive capacity. Building adaptive capacity individually and organisationally will be essential to our survival into the 21st century. It is no less important in enabling successful collaboration, which, as with any change process, requires participants to abandon the familiar and the routine. Sussman²³ has proposed that whilst organisational capacity serves the strategic purpose of stabilising organisations and creating order, adaptive capacity involves the complementary and often destabilising quest for change in pursuit of improved performance, relevance and impact. Organisations that possess adaptive capacity are very focused on and responsive to what is happening outside their organisational boundaries. They consciously interact with their environments, which, in turn, provide information-rich feedback, stimulate learning, and ultimately prompt improved performance. Sussman proposes four qualities that capture the essence of adaptive organisations: external focus; network connectedness; inquisitiveness and innovation. Like other capacity-building efforts, adaptive capacity is not a summit that can be conquered and a flag planted. It is something organisations pursue in an ongoing manner through measures that embed the four attributes ²⁴

10. Valuing risk taking, tolerating failure

The interdependence and complexity that lies at the heart of collaborative working inevitably increases exposure to risk. NCVO²⁵ have listed what they see as the main risks of collaborating (as well as the potential benefits), which include: outcomes not justifying the time and resources invested; loss of flexibility in working practices; complexity in decision-making and loss of autonomy; diverting energy and resources away from core aims - mission drift; damage to or dilution of brand and reputation; damage to organisation and waste of resources if collaboration is unsuccessful; lack of awareness of legal obligations and stakeholder confusion.²⁶ All these (and probably

²³ Sussman, C. (2004) 'Building Adaptive Capacity: the quest for improved organizational performance', Sussman Associates

²⁴ http://www.barrfoundation.org/usr_doc/Building_Adaptive_Capacity.pdf

²⁵ The National Council for Voluntary Organisations

²⁶ http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/collaborative-working/information-and-tools/whatcollaborativeworkinginvolves#Benefits_and_risks

some more) and their complex interaction represent multi-layered and unpredictable sources or risk and failure.

Hansen²⁷ has identified a number of what he calls 'collaboration traps' including: collaborating in hostile territory; over collaborating; overshooting the potential value of the collaboration; underestimating costs; misdiagnosing the problem and implementing the wrong solutions. His solution is to adopt a set of principles, which he calls 'disciplined collaboration' (of which more in the next section.) Yet if learning how to collaborate more and more effectively is to be a key part of our survival kit, then valuing the risk-taking that entails, and tolerating the failures that will inevitably come about simply because risks sometimes result in failure, will need to be more warmly embraced.

Ellis²⁸ has asserted that the productive tension between the demands of continued viability and those of risk-taking represent the force field in which the successful leadership of cultural organisations plans, manages and makes choices. He proposes that arts and cultural organisations that wish to extend their capacity to take risks need to manifest at least three distinctive traits. Firstly, a clarity about 'what really matters', what capacities and purposes the organisation chooses to protect, what can be negotiated, and what is non-negotiable and why. Secondly, a deep interest in understanding the wider environment in which they operate and the likely impact of changes in that environment on their own situation. And thirdly, an equal interest in their own organisational dynamics: the causal relationships that link programs, financial capacity and organisational capacity – the 'iron triangle' – that if ignored, will always prevent an organisation from realising its potential.²⁹

²⁷ Hansen, M. (2009) *Collaboration*, Harvard Business Press

²⁸ Ellis, A. (2002) 'Taking risks in times of adversity: a background note for the Ford Foundation's New Directions/New Donors program', Nonprofit Finance Fund, New York

²⁹ <http://www.aeaconsulting.com/articles/Taking%20Risks.pdf>